

To: Martha's Vineyard Commission

From: Gary Hebert, Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST)

Subject: Responses to Relevant Parking/Traffic Questions raised at the MVC Hearings re DRI 324-M- Martha's Vineyard Hospital

Date: November 16, 2006

MVC QUESTIONS/ISSUES:

Parking

- **Elaborate on the meaning of visitor parking being controlled. What does that mean?**

A: A goal of the site circulation plan is to improve the delineation between parking areas such that hospital visitors have a better opportunity to access the Hospital's services. The site plan calls for clearly identifying Hospital visitor lots and staff parking areas through signage. Staff vehicle owners will be required to register with the Hospital and will be provided highly visible stickers for vehicles. The Hospital will need to develop an enforcement policy as it pertains to staff use of the visitor spaces and vice versa. Ideally, the policy will be self-enforcing to the maximum extent possible, with illegal parking brought to the attention of the main desk attendant, who will then forward the information to the an identified Hospital management staff person. There is no plan to charge for visitor's parking, nor is there any plan to tow vehicles, unless they present a public safety hazard (e.g., blocking an access route to the hospital).

- **Is it necessary to have two exits in that lot? Could you just have one access on Eastville?**

A: MVH, at the November 9 MVC meeting, indicated it would provide access to and from the off-site staff lot via Temahigan Avenue only to address abutters concerns on Eastville Avenue. From an overall traffic perspective, if only one staff parking area access is permitted, the access onto Temahigan Avenue produces a single 'T' intersection, rather than a 4-way intersection which would be created opposite the existing emergency room/rear access driveway on Eastville Avenue. The drawback to the Temahigan Avenue access is that staff destined for Eastville Avenue would need to make two successive left turn movements from Temahigan Avenue approaching Eastville Avenue. The second left turn at Eastville Avenue is troublesome, as it requires motorists to advance as close to the intersection as possible to see on-coming traffic coming from Beach Road following a sharp curve in the Beach Road alignment. We note that, during busy traffic periods, staff users can avoid the two left turns by simply turning right onto Temahigan Avenue, as there are alternative connections back to Eastville Avenue. Initial pedestrian access

provided for staff should be provided along Temahigan Avenue via a new sidewalk, since that would be the shortest distance path to the staff entrance at the current emergency building wing. Originally, it was thought that staff would access the existing emergency wing building via the southerly entrance, but the Hospital has since clarified that staff entries will primarily occur via Linton Lane. At minimum, a crosswalk with appropriate warning signs could be provided on the southeast corner of the Temahigan Avenue as it intersects Eastville Avenue. MVH, at the November 9 meeting, indicated it would assist in the implementation of modifications to the Temahigan Avenue intersection which the Town of Oak Bluffs estimates would entail approximately \$30,000 in capital costs. Another potential pedestrian entrance exists on the southeast corner of the emergency building wing, but such an entrance would result in longer staff walking distances the way the hospital is configured at present. MVH reserves the right to develop a future pedestrian corridor between the future gravel lot and Eastville Avenue, should the need arise in the long term. In the meantime, one entrance for vehicles and pedestrians for the foreseeable future will minimize the environmental impacts to the parcel and its treed vegetation.

• Has your client accepted the mitigation measures in the parking report? How will you do some of the monitoring you are talking about?

Response: Martha's Vineyard Hospital is committed to incorporating recommended parking mitigation measures. Conceptually, as noted above, the delineated staff and visitor areas should mainly be self-enforcing by staff and visitors. Monitoring involves identifying a staff person (or department) whose responsibility will be to enforce the use of the staff parking areas, and to identify and resolve hazardous parking conditions (e.g., blocking an emergency access corridor that warrant towing of an illegally parked vehicles). Because paid and volunteer staff are under the control of the Hospital, the Hospital may choose to institute fines for paid and volunteer staff who park in designated visitor areas should the distribution of parking become a problem. Visitors could be discouraged from parking in staff parking areas by primarily by warnings. However, it is unlikely that visitors will be parking in staff areas unless designated visitor areas are fully occupied.

• Would it be ok if we buffered the phase two parking without actually building it?

Response: Yes.

• I was thinking that you should do as little damage to the existing woodland as possible until actually needed. How far is it to the nearest residence?

Response: The revised site plan addresses this issue. See above discussion re the single access off Temahigan Avenue.

• Is there any flexibility at all in the number of visitor spaces?

Response: Yes. Projected future parking space demands were estimated in aggregate including staff and visitor parking demands. The goal is to adequately satisfy both staff and visitor demands to the best extent possible. There is flexibility as to how the staff/visitor parking demands will be allocated, within reason. Adjustments of the visitor and staff parking space allocations will be reviewed over time and adjusted as necessary to meet the stated goal. Growth in parking demands is expected to slowly occur over time.

Traffic

- **You could have one access to the employee parking until and if the intersection of Eastville and Temahigan gets changed.**

Response: As noted above, a single access to the staff parking lot of Temahigan is to be provided in the short and long term. The Hospital requested consideration of the dual accesses, as they would not require staff users to traverse the intersection of Temahigan Avenue with Beach Road and Eastville Avenue. Based on recent concerns expressed at the MVC public hearings, the size of the staff lot is being reduced to approximately 50 parking spaces vs. up to 125 spaces in the long term under the original plan.

- Are there sidewalks to allow people to walk around the perimeter of the building?

Response: There are sidewalks along the Beach Road and new Emergency Room entrances where pedestrian activity is expected.

- **A Commissioner asked OB Selectmen if they have looked at these intersection changes.**

Response: Conceptual changes were not discussed with the OB Selectmen, but were conceptually discussed with the OB Traffic Superintendent, Mr. Richard Combra, Jr. Mr. Combra indicated that MassHighway is going to resurface the Beach Road/Temahigan Road corridor in the near future.

- Kerry Scott has talked to others about some of these changes such as hooking up to the wastewater and intersection changes and wonders how much will they cost?

A: Concepts of potential future intersection modifications at the intersections of Temahigan Ave./Beach Rd./Eastville Ave. and Eastville Ave./County Road were provided in the traffic report. The safety data indicated that neither location had a crash rate exceeding the statewide average for 2000-2004 (Put another way, if it isn't broken, don't fix it). Because the future is unpredictable, it is possible that either location may warrant improvements in the next 5-10 years with or without the proposed hospital expansion. The proposed Hospital expansion would add less than 3% new traffic to either of the two intersections in question. The Oak Bluffs Highway Department projects that the intersection modifications at the Temahigan Ave./Beach Rd./Eastville Avenue will cost approximately \$30,000. These costs are eligible for state funding assistance. At the

November 9 meeting, MVH indicated it would provide a \$30,000 intersection modification, if necessary.

Implementation of conceptual modifications at the intersection of Eastville Avenue and County Road could range of \$100,000-\$150,000.

• Would like some data on hand to know what is involved for an ambulance traveling from the up island towns compared to the blinker. At some point the sheriff said that he was in charge of emergency vehicles. Maybe we could get him to come back and talk about that.

A: From the report, “Forced traffic diversions to other routes like State Road to Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road through ‘the blinker’ intersection at Barnes Road, already congested during the summer, would make the alternative routes even more congested. It is not possible to estimate meaningful difference in travel times, however, as the situation depends on the time of the day/year/month when diversions occur and how long the diversion is in effect, the level of congestion on the alternate route, etc. Because the MVH does have a heliport, extreme emergencies may be addressed by helicopter. For example, the distance between the ‘5 corners’ intersection and the Hospital is approximately 0.9 of a mile. The alternative route from ‘5 corners’ via State Road to Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road, Barnes Road, County Road, and Eastville Avenue through the Blinker intersection is approximately 4.1 miles. If traveled at an average speed of 20 miles per hour, the differential in travel time would be approximately 10 minutes. However, if the average travel speed on the alternate route were 10 miles per hour (due to congestion) the difference in travel time access to the MVH would theoretically be approximately 22 minutes. Again, it is anticipated that the drawbridge replacement project will acceptably address the drawbridge access issue by removing the issue of drawbridge unreliability. Intermittent Beach Road flooding issues would remain, and the proposed MVH expansion and renovation will not add substantial traffic volumes beyond that already being experienced when Beach Road flooding occurs.”

GLH:gh
11/16/06